

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARP:GQLUMSDEN,JR:GLK

APPROVED BY ACTING SECRETARY

NEA/ARP:BWRAMPPELMEIER

NEA/IRN:BMORTON

DOD/ISA(NESA):GSICK

PM/ISO:MR. STODDART (INFO)

NEA:SSOBER

S/S MR. LUERS

NEA:ALATHERTON

S - LSEAGLEBURGER

----- 048843

R 082251Z JUL 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

SECDEF

MIDEASTFOR

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T STATE 146898

EXDIS

E.O. 11652; GDS

TAGS. MARR PFOR US IR SA BA EG

SUBJECT: RETAINING MIDEASTFOR IN BAHRAIN

REF: (A) MANAMA 0470, (B) JIDDA 3706, (C) STATE 135800,
(D) TEHRAN 5481; (E) JIDDA 3838

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM ACTING SECRETARY SISCO

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1. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE ENCOURAGING UNOFFICIAL INDICATIONS

THAT FAVORABLE GOB DECISION RE MIDEASTFOR MAY NOW BE A POSSIBILITY, WE STILL HAVE NO SOLID COMMITMENT TERMINATION NOTICE WILL BE RESCINDED, OR AT LEAST POSTPONED. CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY OF GOB INTENTION WILL MAKE WITHDRAWAL PROGRESSIVELY MORE EXPENSIVE AND LESS ORDERLY THE LONGER GOB DECISION IS DELAYED.

2. GOB LEADERSHIP (REFTEL A) IS GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO CONTINUED MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE, BUT IS CONCERSED OVER ATTITUDE OF ITS NEIGHBORS AND HOW IT MUST JUSTIFY US NAVY'S CONTINUED PRESENCE TO ITS NEWLY-FORMED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH MUHAMMAD HAS STRESSED THAT IF NAVY IS TO STAY, SOME SIGN OF SUPPORT PARTICULARLY FROM SAUDI ARABIA BUT ALSO HOPEFULLY FROM IRAN IS NEEDED.

3. STATUS OF MIDEASTFOR WAS RAISED WITH PRINCE FAHD OF SAUDI ARABIA WHEN HE WAS IN WASHINGTON AND HE PROMISED TO GIVE BAHRAINIS HIS QUOTE STUDIED ADVICE UNQUOTE. REFTELS B, C AND E REPORT STATUS OF OUR FOLLOW UP OF FAHD'S OFFER. WE ARE NOT YET SURE WHETHER SAUDI APPROACH HAS ACTUALLY BEEN MADE, AND ALTHOUGH WE ARE AWARE OF AMBIVALENT IRANIAN ATTITUDE, WE ARE IMPRESSED WITH AMBASSADOR TWINAM'S REPORT THAT GOB WOULD TAKE SERIOUSLY ANY INDICATIONS BY GOI THAT TEHRAN HAS NO OBJECTIONS TO CONTINUATION OF PRESENT MIDEASTFOR ARRANGEMENTS.

4. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE TAKE UP AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL WITHIN GOI PROBLEM WE FACE IF GOB DOES NOT WITHDRAW TERMINATION NOTICE. MATTER SHOULD BE RAISED IN FORM OF CONSULTATION WITH GOI ABOUT ISSUE OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND CONCERN, WITH GOI BEING INVITED TO PRESENT ITS VIEWS.

5. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE WOULD EXPECT EMBASSY TO STRESS POINT THAT PRECIPITATE MIDEASTFOR WITHDRAWAL AT THIS TIME WOULD HAVE EFFECT OF ENCOURAGING RADICALS IN BAHRAIN AND PUTTING MORE PRESSURE ON BAHRAIN'S LEADERSHIP TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO THEM--A SITUATION WHICH WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF EITHER THE U.S. OR IRAN.

6. YOU SHOULD STOP SHORT OF AN EXPLICIT REQUEST FOR GOI
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INTERVENTION WITH GOB. HOWEVER, IF IRANIANS ASK WHAT THEY COULD DO, YOU MAY NOTE OUR BELIEF THAT SHAH RECOGNIZES MIDEASTFOR AS A FACTOR FOR STABILITY IN GULF AS WELL AS A BRAKE ON SOVIET AND RADICAL ASPIRATIONS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU SHOULD ADD, IRANIANS MAY WISH TO INDICATE TO GOB THAT, EVEN GIVEN TEHRAN'S POLICY RE FOREIGN NAVAL FORCES IN GULF, GOI IS NOT SEEKING EARLY MIDEASTFOR WITHDRAWAL AND HOPES GOB WILL NOT PRESS

ACTION. SISCO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NAVAL FORCES, TREATY TERMINATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, MILITARY BASES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinml
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE146898
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: GQLUMSDEN,JR:GLK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740181-1082
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740767/aaaacflj.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: (A) MANAMA 0470, (B) JIDDA 3706, (C)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinml
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by martinml>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RETAINING MIDEASTFOR IN BAHRAIN
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, US, IR, SA, BA, EG
To: TEHRAN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005